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To Headteachers and governors of Ealing schools

In July 2019, the Department for Education released final guidance for **Relationships, Sex and Health Education**. This statutory guidance will come into effect from September 2020 and is for maintained, non-maintained and independent schools, faith schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

Ealing Council actively endorses the guidance and advises all schools to ensure that they are fully prepared to implement Relationships, Sex and Health Education from September 2020. Ealing schools requiring further support, advice and resources can access materials and services through the Ealing health improvement team's EGFL pages: <https://www.egfl.org.uk/elp-services/health-improvement-schools>

All young people deserve an education that reflects themselves, their families and that fully recognises diversity. This new guidance outlines an inclusive curriculum that is representative of life in modern Britain and supports children and young people in understanding diversity and preparing for that life.

We are aware that there have been concerns raised by parents in some schools regarding the content of this guidance in its recognition of same-sex family structures, particularly in primary schools. The council fully supports teaching in primary schools that makes explicit reference to different types of families and that develops children's understanding that not every family is the same. Teaching about difference and embracing an inclusive ethos of non-discrimination, is outlined in the 2010 Equality Act. Schools are expected to be mindful of the protected characteristics in the act of race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership. Schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils or staff on grounds of their protected characteristics and must ensure that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. The substance of the Equality Act is also mirrored in the British Values which schools must actively promote. Any view or opinions that are discriminatory towards any of the protected characteristics, or that marginalise individuals or groups, should not be tolerated.

Although schools are free to determine how they teach Relationships and Sex Education, Ealing Council advises all primary schools to use the Ealing Health Improvement team's PSHE scheme of [work](#). This scheme of work reflects an inclusive curriculum, where celebrating difference and safeguarding children are the golden threads throughout all lessons. Rather than highlighting differences, differences are celebrated through this scheme of work without relying on 'one off, stand-alone lessons'. This scheme of work is free to all maintained schools in our borough. High schools and specials schools are advised to use the learning overview and RSE lesson plans developed by the Ealing Health Improvement team to deliver effective [RSE](#).

The teaching of sex education, as part of relationships and health education is statutory for all schools from Year 7. Parents still retain the right to withdraw their children from lessons on sex education until three terms before the child turns 16. Parents cannot withdraw their child from lessons on relationships, families and keeping safe at any age. Schools must therefore make clear to parents when the curriculum extends from teaching about relationships and families to teaching about sex education so that there is no confusion about these aspects. More information on parental rights to withdraw from RSE lessons can be found in the Relationships and Sex Education policy templates on the [Ealing Grid For Learning](#).

The DfE guidance states that school must consult with parents when finalising their policy and resources. Schools are reminded that consultation with parents is not a debate or discussion about the content of the curriculum rather a time when the school can provide information to parents and allow sufficient time for parents to ask questions or seek clarification. Schools may choose to call this engagement, liaising or sharing information with parents rather than a consultation.

To conclude, it is expected that all schools in Ealing implement this statutory guidance from September 2020 and ensure that their curriculum is fully inclusive and representative of all protected characteristics.

Further information on statutory relationships, Sex and Health education can be found in the RSE briefing papers on the [Ealing Grid for Learning](#).

If you have any questions about RSE, please contact Claire Vaughan on meadec@ealing.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



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